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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

FS-431

SD 11. A1
A42 no. 8431

Woodsy Owl Recreation Tips

Woodsy Owl's Recreation Tips

Woodsy Owl is delighted to share with you some useful recreation tips. These tips can help you make your recreational adventures in the national forests safe, exciting, and memorable.

Before you get started, plan your recreational activities carefully and well in advance. Study maps of the areas you'll be visiting, get all the permits that may be required, and learn about the terrain. Whether you are hiking, backpacking, fishing, camping, 4-wheeling, or trail biking, these tips are just plain common sense!

Personal Safety

Be sure to take a first aid kit, map, compass, whistle, and guidebook. Be prepared for unexpected changes in weather. Bring a raincoat or poncho, sunglasses, and sunburn lotion.

Whether you will be with someone or traveling alone, always leave a copy of your trip plans with a family member or close friend. Be sure to contact someone back home if you change your plans. Be as specific as possible about how someone can reach you if it becomes necessary.

Do not leave food out while you are away from camp. Keep all food stored in a safe place. In bear country, store food in your car or other vehicle.

Although accidents are rare, they do happen! There are ways that you can help guard against them. Keep small children from wandering away unattended. Know ahead of time how to get in touch with the park or forest rangers. Familiarize yourself with hazards of the area such as dangerous animals, rock slides, poisonous snakes, plants, and insects. Know how to cope with them. Remain calm if an accident occurs and a member of your group is injured. Someone should stay with the injured person while others go for help.

Leave No Trace

Remember to take out of the forest what you bring in. Whenever you can, go one step further and remove trash that less thoughtful persons have left behind.

It is very important to keep your water supply clean. Always dispose of soapy water, grease, and other waste away from lakes, springs, or streams. Boil drinking water unless you are certain it is safe.

At campsites, use toilets provided and help keep them clean. In areas where toilets are not provided, stay at least 100 feet from any water when disposing of human waste. Dig a small hole about 8 inches deep. Cover it with loose soil and sod after using.

Fire Safety

A portable stove can be extremely valuable on a camping trip. If you use firewood or charcoal for cooking, carry them with you, since they are not always available at camp sites. Use the fireplaces provided and do not leave the fire unattended.

If you must have a campfire, first clear the ground to the bare soil. Keep your campfire safe and small! Be sure you have a permit if required. Shelter your fire from high winds and keep it away from logs, brush, and tree trunks. Put your fire out by soaking it with water and stirring it with a stick, trowel, or other tool. Make sure it is **dead out** before leaving.

Now here are some tips related to specific recreational activities. They should be remembered along with the tips listed above.

Woodsy Owl On Hiking and Backpacking

Plan Your Trip

Before your hike, be familiar with all options—time, alternative routes, and weather. Keep in mind the shorter daylight hours of fall and winter.

Limit the Size of Your Group

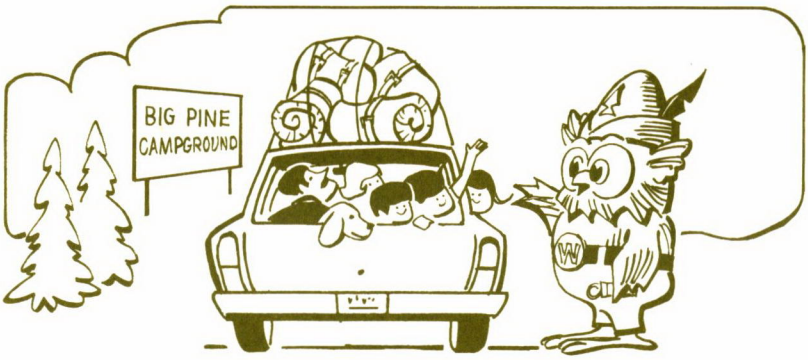
Limit your group to a size a leader can safely handle and that won't damage back country sites. One leader for eight hikers is recommended.

Help Preserve Nature's Ground Cover

Stay on hiking trails. When you take a break, pick a camping site where you won't need to clear vegetation or make a ditch around your tent.

Carry Extras

Carry plenty of warm clothing such as windbreakers, wool jackets, hats, and gloves. Keep high-energy foods such as hard candies, chocolate, or dried fruits handy. Don't overload yourself—but be prepared for emergencies.



Woodsy Owl on Camping

So you are going camping! Good! Here are a few tips to help make your trip more enjoyable.

Plan Ahead

Find out as much as you can about the area where you will be camping. Obtain maps if possible. Know campground locations and types of camping permitted (tents, campers, trailers). Make reservations or have an alternate plan. Find out what facilities (water, toilets, fireplace, etc.) are provided. This will help in planning what to take.

At the Campground

Select a site. Consider the amount of privacy afforded, distance from facilities, and ease of entry and exit. If using a tent, look for a level, well-drained site. Don't forget to bring tent poles, stakes, and foam pads or air mattresses. Cutting trees, shrubs, or branches is forbidden at most campgrounds. Check bulletin boards for rules and procedures.

Campground Courtesy

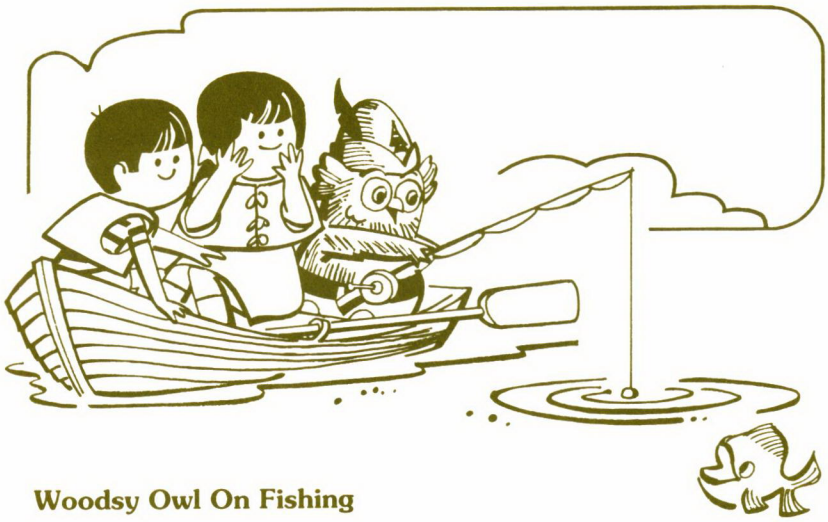
Respect the rights and privacy of other campers. Avoid making loud noises at night. Treat signs, tables, and other facilities as if they were your own. Leave your campsite the way you would like to find it.

Help Preserve Soil and Plants

Leave no trace that you have been in the forest. Use only designated paths and trails. Leave wildflowers for others to enjoy. Don't dig holes unless it's

permitted. If you dig holes, replace soil and sod, and then tamp well. Avoid disturbing soil in fragile areas such as streambanks or mountain meadows. Help maintain the natural beauty of the area. Remember, others will want to enjoy the site after you are gone.

Give a Hoot... Don't Pollute!



Woodsy Owl On Fishing

Before You Set Out

Take time to study local regulations before you head for the nearest fishing hole. Know the limitations on the size and amount of your catch. Also, know what kinds of fish are in season and what kinds are out. If you will be crossing or fishing private land, get permission from the land owner first. Take extra hooks, lures, leaders, and other necessities. Don't forget your fishing license.

Play It Safe

When baiting hooks, keep a firm grip on the bait. The movements of slippery worms or minnows can cause serious hook injuries. Handle lures having clusters of double or treble hooks with special care. When landing fish, ease it out of the water into a net or onto the bank. Jerking a fish out of the water can result in wildly flying hooks if the fish comes loose.

On the Bank or Shore

Stay with your fishing pole. Protect curious children and animals from painful injuries by returning loose hooks and lures to your tackle box. Tangled fishing lines should be put into the trash, so birds or other animals don't get caught in them. Watch your backcasting clearance: avoid trees, bushes, and especially people. Help prevent erosion: protect grass and shrubs near the waters edge. If you dig for worms, go back from the water to do so. Remove a chunk of sod, look for worms, level the soil, and then replace the sod.

Wading in Lakes or Streams

Watch your footing when wading in lakes or streams. Look out for dropoffs, deep holes, slippery rocks, soft mud, and quicksand. Always test the footing ahead and keep most of your weight on the foot already on safe ground. Avoid wading through the lines of people who are fishing off the bank

Out on the Lake or River

Wear an approved life jacket. Watch for storm warnings. Don't overload your craft. Stay seated when in small boats and canoes. They capsize easily! Maintain a safe and courteous distance from other fishermen. If your line becomes tangled with somebody else's stop and untangle it. This will save both tackle and tempers.

Keep Water Clean

Clean water is the best fishing water. Keep soaps, detergents, garbage, and other waste out of lakes and streams. Use toilets where provided. Otherwise, dispose of human waste in accordance with local regulations. Don't discard unused bait in the water.

Pack It In, Pack It Out!

Before you leave the forest, pack up and take with you wads of fishing line, hooks, drink cans, bottles, plastic boxes, and paper bags. If left behind, these items will spoil the water and the shore.

Help Make Fishing

...more enjoyable for all. Work with your local sports club, planning board, and conservation department for better sportsmanship, better fishing, and better fish habitat. Take no more fish than you can use and release all that are undersize. Be a pal—teach a friend how to fish.

Woodsy Owl On 4-Wheeling and Trail Biking

Where will you ride?

Choose well your places to ride. Before you go out, check on available trails, their condition, ownership of land, posted areas, and regulations that apply. Ask about barriers such as fences, cliffs, and swamps. Find out where rivers can be crossed. Get maps and learn how to use them. Forest or park rangers, sheriffs' offices, sports clubs, and other trailbikers and 4-wheelers are good sources of information.

Check Your Equipment

Make sure your machine is right for the terrain and conditions. Do you have the right tires? Is your exhaust system adequate? If riding in a forested area, do you have an approved spark arrester? Take along tools and spare parts

for minor repairs. Bikers should have sparkplugs, control cables, chain links, and a tire repair kit. Four-wheelers will want sparkplugs, gas, oil, radiator water, jack, tire repair kit, hoses, belts, and cable clamps for their winches.

Check Your Clothing

Choose clothing for safety and comfort. Bikers should have sturdy but comfortable helmets, goggles, gloves, and boots. Other clothing should be appropriate to the weather and provide protection against brush and possible spills. Four-Wheelers should dress for the weather and carry foul weather gear plus sturdy leather or leather-palmed gloves for handling the winch cable.

Be Prepared For Emergencies

The unexpected can happen to you! Take a fire extinguisher, drinking water, flashlight, matches, blankets, and flairs.

When You Ride

Riding with a companion adds to the enjoyment and makes good safety sense. Follow all regulations. Don't spin wheels unnecessarily and avoid driving in streams or on steep hills with loose soil. Don't harass livestock or wildlife. Leave natural and historical features as you find them. Stay on roads and trails specifically designated for such use. Remember that littering the landscape where you ride could make it necessary to close off those trails.

Be Courteous and Considerate

At times, you will share the same space with hikers, horseback riders, hunters, fishermen, and others who enjoy the outdoors. Courtesy and consideration will make the sharing more tolerable for all, Respect the land and the rights of others. Be sure your machine is as quiet as you can make it. Leave fences and gates as you find them. Assist others who need help. Courtesy is catching. Pass it on.

Give a Hoot... Don't Pollute!

Feb. 1991

This publication supersedes "Woodsy Owl on Hiking and Backpacking," FS-313; "Woodsy Owl on Camping," FS-318; "Woodsy Owl on Fishing," FS-217; and "Woodsy Owl on 4-Wheeling and Trail Biking," FS-330